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ABSTRACT

A statewide assessment of the Intensive Office Laboratory (IOL) programs in Indiana is reported. The IOL programs were established to better prepare students for initial entry into office occupations on graduation and for advancement on the job after employment. The five-year period from 1966 through 1971 was selected for analysis. The evaluation study is divided into two parts. Part 1 involves a study of the background and makeup of the IOL programs and the IOL coordinators. Part 2 involves a followup study of the graduates of IOL programs. (Author/VA)

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INTENSIVE OFFICE LABORATORY FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

Part I
Background and Make-up
of the
Intensive Office Laboratory
Programs and Coordinators

Part II
Evaluation and Analysis
of
Intensive Office Laboratory
Graduates

by
Wynnie Ford, Director
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, Indiana

in
cooperation
with
State Board of
Vocational and Technical Education
Department of Public Instruction
Division of Vocational Education
State of Indiana

(VT-102-160)

Spring, 1975

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Special acknowledgment is made to IOL Regional Coordinators Marjorie Baran, Ina Cawood, Harold Moody, Roberta Patmore, and Sharon Sharrett for their assistance and advice in refining the questionnaires and for participating in the field study which was conducted prior to the primary study. Sincere appreciation also is expressed for the assistance of the IOL coordinators and to their IOL graduates without whose help the study would not have been possible.

PERSONNEL

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INTENSIVE OFFICE LABORATORY
FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

With the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the adoption of a State Plan for the administration of vocational office education in Indiana, the concept of an Intensive Office Laboratory (IOL) was developed and established in Indiana high schools. The establishment of the IOL programs was a means to better prepare students for initial entry into office occupations upon graduation and for advancement on the job after employment.

In Indiana, the Intensive Office Laboratory is often described as a laboratory situation which duplicates actual office duties, responsibilities, and equipment. It is a senior-level capstone experience open only to those students who desire, need, and can benefit from immediate employment upon graduation. The purpose of the IOL is to prepare students for immediate and gainful employment in office occupations and to prepare employees for advancement on the job after employment.

The Intensive Office Laboratory programs have been in existence for a number of years. Up to this time, however, no comprehensive analysis has been made which could serve as a basis for assisting the schools in evaluating the adequacy of their programs. There has been no analysis made to determine how well the programs are meeting the needs of the graduates of the programs. A state-wide study of the IOL programs and the graduates of the programs should be of value in determining the adequacy of the beginning employees' preparation and training. Such a study should assist in evaluating how well students can do the work which they are called upon to do in the office and how well prepared they are, with experience, for advancement on the job. Such an analysis also should provide information which would suggest means for improving individual IOL programs.

The five-year period from 1966 through 1971 was selected for analysis in order that the data gathered would provide information from the time of inception through the development of firmly established programs.

Statement of the Problem

The study is divided into two parts. Part I involves a study of the background and make-up of the IOL programs and the IOL coordinators. Part II involves a follow-up study of the graduates of the IOL programs.

Specific objectives of Part I were to:

1. Analyze data regarding types of IOL programs, types of students served, types of related instruction, and services rendered by advisory committees.

2. Gather background information on IOL coordinators.

3. Determine the effectiveness of the IOL programs as judged by the IOL coordinators.

4. Determine areas of needed improvements and areas of strength of the IOL programs.

Specific objectives of Part II were to:

1. Determine if the IOL programs are effectively meeting the needs of graduates in terms of qualifications and adequacy of preparation and training for initial employment in the office occupations.

2. Determine if the IOL programs are effectively meeting the needs of graduates in terms of preparation and training for advancement on the job after initial employment.

3. Determine areas of needed improvement and areas of strength of the IOL programs.

Purpose of Study

The general purpose of the study is to facilitate an evaluation of the IOL programs in order that IOL coordinators working cooperatively with the Division of Vocational Education may provide students with the most beneficial experiences possible.

Several additional objectives were accomplished simultaneously with the accomplishment of the major purpose.

1. A list of the types of businesses in which IOL graduates find initial employment is available to coordinators.

2. A list of the duties and tasks performed most frequently by secretarial, clerical, steno-clerical, and data processing employees who were former IOL students is available to coordinators.

3. A list of the equipment used most frequently by secretarial, clerical, steno-clerical, and data processing employees who were former IOL students is available to coordinators.

4. An evaluation by IOL graduates of a list of competencies and abilities needed for success on the job is available to coordinators.

The data provided can be used by IOL coordinators to determine how well their programs are meeting the needs of their graduates. Specifically it can be used to assist coordinators in evaluating how well their students can do the work which they are called upon to do in the office, the adequacy of their preparation, and how qualified they are, with experience, for advancement. The data also can be used as a basis for improving present programs.

PROCEDURES

The information required to satisfy each of the foregoing listed objectives was developed from individual and group interviews with coordinators and from questionnaires that were developed and mailed to IOL coordinators and to IOL graduates now on the job.

Development of Questionnaires

The questionnaire designed for the IOL graduate follow-up and the questionnaire designed for IOL coordinators were developed in consultation with Dr. Harry Krueckeberg, Director of the Bureau of Business Research, ISU; Dr. Ralph Mason, Chairman, BDOA Department, ISU; Mr. John Lee, Chief Consultant, Business and Office Education, Division of Vocational Education; and Mrs. Linda Smith, Consultant and OEA Advisor, State Office.

Field Interviews and Field Study

A meeting was held with the twelve regional coordinators of the IOL and COE programs with Mr. John Lee and Mrs. Linda Smith of the State Office assisting. The purpose of the study was explained to the coordinators.

Each IOL regional coordinator was asked to (1) complete the questionnaire designed for coordinators and (2) conduct a follow-up study of his IOL graduates for a five-year period (1967-1971) using the questionnaire designed for student follow up.

Primary Study

After the field study was completed and the questionnaires were further refined, a group meeting was scheduled with the IOL coordinators during the IVA Conference. At that time, the purpose of the study was explained to the coordinators and they were asked to participate in the study.

1. Each coordinator was asked to complete the questionnaire designed for coordinators.

2. Each coordinator was asked to supply a list of names and addresses of his IOL graduates for the five-year period 1967 to 1971. The Bureau of Business Research, ISU, mailed out the questionnaires to the graduates.

At the request of Mr. John Lee, Chief Consultant of Business and Office Education, distribution of the results of this project will be made to IOL coordinators, other office education teachers, administrators, and to appropriate out-of-state personnel.

Analysis of Data

IOL coordinators. After the completed questionnaires were received from the IOL coordinators, they were analyzed by the project director to determine:

1. the educational background of coordinators.
2. the work experience of coordinators.
3. years of experience as coordinators.
4. the number and types of students served.
5. the types of IOL programs.
6. prerequisites and the selection process used.
7. the provisions made for students with special needs.
8. the organizational structure of the laboratories.
9. the procedures used to develop work stations and the methods used to obtain work stations.
10. the number and types of work stations.
11. the make up of advisory committees and the services rendered by the committees.
12. the types of activities and the methods and techniques used for related instruction.
13. the types of suggestions received from graduates.
14. the most helpful and least helpful IOL activities.
15. recommendations for services by the universities and the State Office personnel for improving IOL activities.
16. major strengths and weaknesses of the IOL programs.
17. the type of lab equipment.

IOL graduates. After the completed questionnaires were recevied from the IOL graduates, they were coded by the Bureau of Business Research, ISU. After the data had been entered on punched cards by the Bureau, the cards were sent to the ISU Computer Center for processing. The following data were determined for total respondents, for respondents classified according to initial job title, and for respondents classified according to job title who had held more than one position since graduation.

1. type of IOL experience.
2. employment in what types of businesses.
3. number of office employees.
4. supervision responsibilities.
5. employment tests.
6. additional education, types of training, and purposes of training.
7. promotion potential.
8. specific activities and duties performed on job.
9. extent to which business equipment is used on job.
10. evaluation of abilities and competencies needed on job.
11. evaluation of knowledges, skills, and understandings needed.
12. courses that would be added or dropped from high school program of studies.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Background and Experience of Coordinators

Approximately 85 percent of the coordinators hold a master degree of some type, and 96 percent have been enrolled in some type of vocational course since 1965. Approximately 53 percent have had full-time work experience in the office and 62 percent have had part-time experience. Approximately 83 percent listed three or more years of experience as coordinators. Based on the data received, coordinators are well prepared in terms of both education and office experience to supervise IOL programs.

Characteristics of IOL's

The majority of the IOL's are steno-clerical in nature, meet for an extended period of time, and are two semesters in length. Various types of company "duplications" is by far the most common type of organizational pattern found in the labs. Although the base of the IOL may always be independent work stations, more attention should be given to the development of multi-stations in order that students may experience the problems and procedures connected with the flow of work. Consideration also should be given to adding more production stations so that students may gain from the experience of working for different employers and with different employees.

Some type of selection process is used by most coordinators for entry into the labs; however, there is no one procedure common to the majority of the coordinators. Even allowing for individual situations, it would seem that the letter of application, the interview, and proper prerequisites should have something in common for all. The only prerequisite course required by all for entry into the labs is typewriting. As the IOL is a capstone course with one of the major purposes being to integrate the knowledges, skills, and learnings of individuals in an office situation, it would appear that more attention should be focused on guiding students through appropriate course sequences in order that they may obtain the most benefit from the IOL experience.

Although slightly more than three-fourths of the coordinators made use of a community survey in developing some of their stations, more extensive use of both the community and the area survey should be used in determining the types of stations to incorporate into the labs. Not only would it provide a basis for sound decision making, it would also provide exposure to and feedback from the employing community. Most students have a wide choice of stations related to their occupational goals from which to choose. In addition, more than three-fourths of the labs provide office experience to students through some type of production station.

A rather wide range of activities are covered through related group instruction. Coordinators appear to be concerned with both the further development of specific skill abilities and with intangible abilities necessary for job success. Special needs of students are most frequently met through the use of work stations of varying difficulty, individualized training plans, and remedial instruction. Slightly more than one-third of the coordinators make no provisions for special needs. It would seem that since the IOL is a highly individualized type of class that efforts to meet special needs should be of high priority.

Advisory Committees

Based on the data received, advisory committees are usually composed of from six to nine members selected from a wide range of businesses and services including education. No factors or considerations appear to predominate in the selection process. However, because of the unique position that coordinators hold, they should always be included in the selection process. It would seem highly probable that a proper working relationship that would be of most benefit to the students, the lab, the school, and the community would be difficult to achieve should the coordinator be excluded from the selection process. Reported services by advisory committees were numerous; evidently coordinators make wide and varied use of the committees depending upon the needs of the particular coordinator in each individual situation.

Strengths and Weaknesses of IOL's

The major strengths of the IOL as judged by the coordinators included the "realness" of the program and its transfer value, strong leadership, teacher dedication, and the efforts made by most coordinators and superintendents. The advantages accuring to students as a result of the IOL programs included the flexibility of the program which permits coordinators to vary the training to fit all levels of ability and interest, the variety of teaching-learning experiences as well as specific occupational training, the office atmosphere, "actual" jobs, forms, etc., and the opportunity to develop the intangibles needed by office employees in order to cope with and progress on the job.

The major weaknesses included poor selection of coordinators, lack of cooperation by some coordinators and university personnel, demands made upon the time of the coordinators, lack of time for coordinators to produce and up-grade stations, and the absence of the "live" situation. There seems to be no real concensus among coordinators as to the outstanding strengths and weaknesses of the IOL programs. What one coordinator views as a strength, another is apt to view as a weakness.

Characteristics of the IOL Graduates

Approximately three-fourths of the graduates reported employment as a secretarial or clerical employees in offices with 20 or fewer employees. The majority were employed in either the service industry; the finance, insurance, and real estate industry; the manufacturing industry; or the wholesale industry. According to the responses received from the coordinators, a large number and a variety of work stations are provided for students in these four areas which employ approximately 91 percent of the graduates for both first and last employment.

Although the majority of the graduates feel prepared for initial employment and for promotion after they gain experience, there appears to be a trend for graduates to seek additional education for personal benefit.

Evaluation of IOL's

The enrollment and the number of IOL programs increased steadily throughout the five-year period. Approximately 75 percent of the IOL students were in the upper 50 percent of their classes. Based on the steadily increasing enrollment in the labs, students evidently feel the IOL programs are of value in preparing them for initial employment in the office occupations. However, the vast majority of the students can be classified as above average as measured by class ranking. It would appear that labs should give more consideration to meeting the needs of students ranking in the lower 50 percent of the class. As it is highly probable that many of these students will pursue no further education, it would seem that the IOL programs need to be expanded so that attention can be focused on the problem of helping these students become employable upon graduation.

The labs which reported appear to be equipped with most of the more common business machines as well as the equipment needed for the operation of the lab. Based on the data received from graduates, every lab should be equipped with electric typewriters and ten-key adding machines. Experience on manual typewriters is needed also if it has not been provided for in prerequisite courses. There is a definite need for the installation of some type of telephone system in the labs. Graduates indicated a need for additional training in telephone communications and techniques and only about 17 percent of the labs responding indicated any type of telephone system.

According to the data received from the graduates, filing activities should continue to be stressed in the labs even though data systems of other types have increased in usage during recent years. Other general office activities such as mailing, telephone usage, typing, and serving as receptionist should continue to be emphasized. Transcription, bookkeeping, and data processing activities could be confined to work stations or IOL duties designed especially for those who indicate a career objective in one of these areas.

Based upon the data received from the IOL graduates and from the IOL coordinators, the IOL programs are, on the whole, effectively meeting the needs of graduates in terms of qualifications and adequacy of preparation and training for initial employment in the office occupations and for advancement on the job.

INFORMATION SHEET

A. Kind of Project: (check one)

1	Experimental	4	Demonstration
2	Developmental	5 X	Evaluative
3	Pilot	6	Exemplary

B. Population

TYPE		Numbers
A	Disadvantaged	A
B	Handicapped	B
C	Migrant	C
D	Minority	D
E	Comination of the above	E
F	Other IOL Graduates	F 948
	IOL Coordinators	G 53

GROUP		
1	Pre-school	1
2	Elementary	2
3	Junior High School	3
4	Middle School	4
5	Senior High School	5 X
6	Post Secondary	6
7	Adult	7
8	University	8
9	Employer	9
10	Employee	10
11	Citizens	11
12	Parents	12
13	Combination of the above	13

LOCALITY (check the one which encompasses the locality involved)

a	National	a
b	State	b X
c	Region	c
d	District	d
e	County	e
f	Area	f
g	Community	g
h	School Corporation (LEA)	h

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FINAL REPORT ENDING Spring, 1975
(Date)

Parts I & II

Project No. 57-73-C

ITEMS	Project Budget FY 19--		Total Expenditures on Project		End of Project Balance	
	Agency	Federal	Agency	State / Federal	Agency	State / Federal
A. DIRECT EXPENDITURES						
1. Personnel--printing, collating, secretarial, coding & key punching labor; 2. ~~Contractual services~~ and data processing supervision.						
3. Employee benefits			$1674			
4. Travel	$478	$ 270	212			
5. Supplies and materials		250	50	$ 200		
6. Communciations (include phone calls, printing)		480	58	800		
7. Properties (rentals or purchase of equipment)						
8. Facilities						
9. Product production and dissemination						
10. Project Evaluation						
B. INDIRECT EXPENDITURES			326			
C. TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$478	$1000	$2320	$1000		

Project Monitor _____

Director: Wynnie Ford

LEA: _____

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FINAL REPORT ENDING Spring, 1975
(Date)

Part III

Project No. 57-73-C

ITEMS	Project Budget FY 19--		Total Expenditures on Project		End of Project Balance	
	Agency	Federal	Agency	State / Federal	Agency	State / Federal
A. DIRECT EXPENDITURES						
1. Personnel						
2. Contractual services						
3. Employee benefits						
4. Travel						
5. Supplies and materials						
6. Communciations (include phone calls, printing)		$500		$500		
7. Properties (rentals or purchase of equipment)						
8. Facilities						
9. Product production and dissemination						
10. Project Evaluation						
B. INDIRECT EXPENDITURES						
C. TOTAL EXPENDITURES		$500		$500		

Project Monitor _____

Director: Wynnie Ford

LEA: _____

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BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH

School of Business

Indiana State University

Purpose

A major objective of the School of Business at Indiana State University is to develop, disseminate and store new business knowledge.

It is the primary purpose of the Bureau of Business Research to assist in the attainment of this objective.

The strength of the Bureau at Indiana State University lies in the research production capabilities and interests of the faculty of the School of Business. The Bureau supplements this faculty with service facilities and personnel as required for projects.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Bureau are as follows:

1. To give financial, consultative, technical, and clerical support to research activities of the faculty of the School of Business.
2. Provide researchers and produce research in the fields of Business and Economics applicable to the relevant needs of business, industry, and government.
3. To conduct research in areas in which students of the School of Business participate as a learning process.
4. To publish the significant contributions to the various bodies of knowledge stemming from the research activities of the faculty and the Bureau.
5. To provide business counsel and research service to organizations, government, professions, disciplines, and industries in the area served by the University.
6. To promote cooperation with professional and business groups for purposes of improving research purposes, methodologies, and practices.

Philosophy

Not only are there new needs within the University, but businesses, large and small, are calling more and more for complex, interdisciplinary solutions to problems. Businesses continually require valid information for accurate decision making. In addition, faculty members with special services to offer such as the accountant, the management and marketing expert, are being called on more and more for their assistance.

The presence of this University in the State of Indiana and in the community and the development of a University-Business community calls for the provision of services not provided by, nor available from, the private sector of the economy.

Several of these services are:

a) Skilled business advisors
b) Business research
c) Business information and forecasts
d) Business Outlook Forums

The library as a store house of knowledge and the classroom as a means of dissemination are no longer satisfactory services in and of themselves. The University is now striving to develop and facilitate the development of new knowledge.

Individuals or organizations interested in information on or participation in existing programs or in the development of new research activities are invited to communicate with the Bureau (Area Code 812—232-6311, Extension 2178.